Letter. No. 11. Saturday - May 9th.

Major. J. H. Massey.
6. Palestinian Coy. The Buffs
M.E.F.

My own darling Sweetheart -

I posted a six page letter to you this morning, rather a sort of newsy & not very loving one, so I must hurry up and get moving again at once. I am always afraid that such a letter may arrive at the end of one of those awful gaps, & you will be disappointed. But you know as well as I do how difficult it is to write when you are not feeling in the mood. There is nothing very particular about which to write. And when a letter of mine is not loving, it is far from meaning that I am not thinking about you in a loving way - but I have to feel in some sort of good spirits or feel some urge; being depressed & feeling hopeless is not the right feeling at all.

I told you about my time with this Coy coming to an end on Aug 31st. I saw Col. G. this morning & spoke to him about it. He said that I could stay on if I wanted to - so the ruling does not sound to be a very rigid one. But I told him that I thought a year & a half was about enough - but that I was really well trained as a fighting officer after all this & having left the 5th before I was fully trained. I told him that he should get me a staff job or promotion or both, he just smiled & said he would do what he could. I have this standard regular army outlook that only regular officers can do these jobs - if I was half as bloody brainless & useless as so many of these people I meet you most certainly would never have married me. Well, we shall see - & in the meantime do not worry about me darling - I will get something arranged for myself

or else stay where I am. And with my next application for homecoming, I shall most certainly point to the fact that this job does come to an end for me on Aug 1st for said in an H.Q. that I should have mentioned the horrible desert & worry about our second baby - I thought I had said enough in my 1st application, in the 2nd one. I thought that Hughes' "had observed history" would convey enough without giving details. But I certainly will explain matters more fully for the next time.

Sunday. May 10th. These H.Qs. & their staff officers really are inconsiderate & bungling. At 9-20 last night, a special despatch rider roared up on a motor cycle, with a large envelope for me - & motor cycle, with a large envelope for me - & containing the papers for three Court Martial cases for today. They were all highly legal cases, & ran to 50 pages of evidence, & gave me much work in the Manual of Military Law - & kept me out of bed until 1.0 this morning - & completely stopped my writing to you. I finished two of them today - go on again tomorrow. One was a bright young man who broke out of arrest in Egypt, on another charge, & then came up to Palestine, having fitted himself up with a set of faked credentials as an agent for the M.E. Razzle (which does not exist) & proceeded to sell advertising space to all & sundry. He will be doing hard labour in prison from now until May 9th 1943. The other was a truly disgusting case of buggery between a couple of Arabs - & we had to sit & listen to revolting details about positions &

Vale of Avoca etc; if all took place in a latrine they will be doing six months hard. The trouble is that this business is pretty common with the Arabs - I have heard of a case of an Arab who was in Court for having carnal knowledge of his donkey - who showed out, with great indignation that it was his donkey.

We began at 9.0 this morning, finished at 7.0 - back late for dinner - then I heard Churchill's broadcast - now it is 11.0 which is not the best time for writing to you.

I have read "The Bell Tolls" - I enjoyed it as much as anything I have read for a long time. The characters were magnificently drawn - it was very exciting as a story - it gave one a very good look into the easy on life of the Republican guerillas - it made me very angry that we should by allowed this civil war to happen; even helped Franco. & that we learned so little from it - I liked very much the love scenes, which I found rather beautiful - very understandable.

I have just started vol. of Beatrice Webb's "My Apprenticeship" - which I think I am going to enjoy - I hope I find useful; both vols are in Penguin. I will send them on to you when I have finished.

I am so tired - sleepy. I must go to bed now. I am hoping for a letter & a p.c. tomorrow - Monday my lucky day. Your last p.c. was on 4th of April - if you see what I mean - & your last letter was from March 10th & received May 1st

Goodnight darling pet - Toby sleeps on my bed - oh when will you sleep in it, Maria next door. xxxx H.

Monday - May 11th. No letters & no pics. for me today.

You were talking in a letter about us buying or building a house, & as you will know by now, I have been thinking about it too, & even went as far as to draw a modest plan of one part of my ideas about such a house. It would be wonderful to have our own house, & one day we will have it. But somehow there seems to me to be no hope of having that right away. I think that we are both going to be so militantly political & reforming, that I may have to risk Peter to take my job & stuff it up. And if that should happen, we are neither of us so attached to Bradford that we shall seek another job only there. So that really means that we shall have to find a house to rent again, which is not a very satisfactory prospect really. You were sweet to say, darling, that you could be deliriously happy with me in a rabbit-hutch. And that certainly goes for me too. Anyway, if we can only find something of the sort of 37 Nat Lane again, that would do us very nicely for a few months or a year or two, until we knew more about ourselves. But even that may be very difficult to find when the war is over. If you do pick up to have a look when I am on my way home, do not sign any long or expensive agreement, because I feel that owners will be very much on the make, if the demand for houses outruns the supply. And building or buying as an investment will be no good, because I am afraid prices will be very high. Then when they come down, we shall have lost so much money. It all depends so much on what we

are going to do.

Am I going to carry on at Nantes - take an interest in local politics - see where it leads to - & if I become anything of a public figure, is Peter going to back me, or will he be reconciled? I must say that that seems to me a rather too slow-ready way of trying to be of some use. And so, the alternative is to break right away - & get a job in what is now known as reconstruction - & you use the word too. I do not like the word at all because it has no exact meaning - it is also used by the big business gentlemen who only want to rebuild big business once again for their own profits; - by the ruling class who only want to go on ruling. My idea of reconstruction is, frankly, a bloodless revolution - the building up of a Socialist state. And that is going to be a tremendous job - but I consider it to be a vital necessity in our country - every where else, if we really are going to have a good world in which to live happy decent lives.

Have you noticed darling, during the last few months, the apparent development in my opinions. And I am quite sure that it is not a continuous move on my part further to the left - because I am not being influenced in that direction by anybody. But I am beginning to think for the first time what were my ideas when I left England? I was, roughly, in no particular way, but in my own opinion, a Socialist. And by that, I thought of myself carrying on at Nantes, becoming a director - one day, perhaps, chairman; I would work hard look after my workpeople, do all in my

power to keep them on 5 days a week, to improve their conditions of work; disapproved of Chamberlain & Simon & those such people. connected them with the Conservative party. But I was thinking in a muddled way, or not at all, only sliding about the surface. I always felt that it was wrong that for I could spend £5 in an evening - & yet some man & wife & 2-3 children would be pleased to have that much to live on for 2 weeks. But I could always justify that by thinking that we did not do it very often, & even when we did, we were pretty broke for a week or two afterwards. And I could also justify myself by saying that I did work hard for my money, but I never really considered my advantages of education opportunity family special opportunities. I used to worry generally, about inequalities in money & wealth, but in a very wrong muddled & not at all a Socialist way
I don't ask or aim for complete equality - now or ever - that would be a calamity & a failure. But what I do aim for is complete equality of education - that is, primary education & opportunity for all. An end to the frightful inequalities of money - an end or somewhere near an end, to inheritance. An end to class, this horrible snobbishness. And in other words, really, an end to our whole flawed system.

Now, what has caused my development - & what has caused me to begin thinking, as I think, more clearly? More than anything else, I think, it has been my contact & dealings with the Regular

Many people members of the ruling class out here. At home you know, I did not meet them so much - such people as I met who had money, worked for it, my muddled thinking of those days allowed such people to make money at the expense of the workers. But these people I meet out here are so indescribably snobbish, self satisfied cynical, & so inefficient, lazy unrealistic. They look upon the workers, the coloured races as so much cattle - on the true Arabs as inferior people - they dislike Australians, New Zealanders, Canadians, Czechs, Poles, Free French - & even Americans. In fact, they only consider themselves, the ruling classes - the Regular Army, the Civil Service, London society, & the Country: this may sound pretty good but I'm joking, but by God, it's true. And nobody can say that I am embittered - except in so far as I have their views to thank for having allowed this war to happen, & cause me to come out here, away from you. But meeting them coming in contact with them, has convinced me that they must go - or else completely change their minds & ways of life. It is utterly intolerable to have such people ruling our country, - coming to all the parts of the Empire carrying on in the same way.

What annoys me so much about many articles which I read in magazines papers, & about post-war reconstruction is that they all presume a return to the old system of Capitalism profit making competition - they ponder to some extent to better wages & working

conditions, increased security - when they go on to talk about increased efficiency, methods, management, finances, & so on: some of them even go so far as admitting that industry can no longer be run entirely for profit, but must also be for the good of people. But all that is just talking about, neither more nor less. As long as you have any profit-making, you have competition, & vice versa. And when you have those things, the workers immediately become subordinate to them & all security for their jobs. The cost of labour is an important, if not the main cost of all goods, therefore in profit making, it must be employed at as low a wage as possible & it must be used & driven as hard as possible. You must remember this time & effort I spent in working out how to choose spare bars, & fighting the Union for lower wages & piece rates. Why the hell should this vast majority be so treated like coal & steel & timber, & bargained about in order to employ as little of it as possible for the least amount of money - in order that a small minority can pile up money. And people like me, who came in between the two classes, wear out their minds & bodies in aiding & abetting that ~~minority~~ majority - in order to earn £600 in order to get £700, & £700 in order to get £1000 & so on. How much better to have £500, work peacefully & well for the good of the community as a whole.

Tuesday. May 12th. Midnight came last night. But I want to push on & say more about all this - & I do hope I am not boring you. I realise that I am probably not saying anything very original, but I want you to know what I am thinking, & I am burning to know if you agree with all I say, & what your ideas are about our future. I am very anxious that you should agree with me then we really can feel a common purpose & aim. I am perfectly convinced of my rightness - & as you are an honest intelligent person & have no false ideas about having a rightful place in the world except by your own merit & qualities & efforts, I am equally certain that you will be with me - & so will anybody else of similar qualities.

In my opinion the capitalist profit-making, land & property owning system has two major intolerable defects. Firstly, because the workers & wage earners, that includes foremen clerks shop assistants, yes, managers too, are pinned down to as low a wage as possible, geared up to as much work as possible; in the case of workers on union wages, their standard of life is very low, they have very few comforts & pleasures, no security at all. And secondly, it leads to inevitable international rivalry in trade, & so on to war. This war, the last, was caused by German capitalism's efforts to expand, & the British & French capitalists' efforts to prevent it doing so; it is not a question of National Socialism & Democracy at all - anybody who says differently is talking balls. The only alternative method to Socialism for preventing future wars is the continuance of capitalism in Britain & America. This will keep going a large army, navy & air force to deal with any further German attempts to rise up.

That might or might not see you through

our life time - but sooner or later war would come again. Either by means of our capitalists rearming Germany again, as they have done before - or else by means of Russia having had enough of us, & herself lining up with a Socialist Germany to march against us. That is another very excellent reason why Socialism is necessary in Britain.

I have never read any Marx or Lenin at all but I feel quite certain that their only reason for wanting world revolution was to make a world in which war would be impossible because it would be unnecessary - not for the foolish popular conception that they enjoyed revolution looked upon it as some game or national sport.

And now Stalin is condescendingly praised because he forsook the policy of world revolution & carried on & minded his own business in Russia. Once again, I do not know, but I feel sure that Stalin weighed things up very carefully, decided that world capitalism was too strong an opponent for him, that he must wait for the impulse to come from within a country such as ours. And, the reasons be praised, he went on to make his preparations for this war. But I do not think for one moment that Stalin is going to sit back again & wait for the next one. And if we do not forsake capitalism, he will concentrate on Germany & the rest of Europe. And then we shall have to fall in, a rather bad last - or else our capitalists will lead us into another war - & next time, Canada Australia S. Africa will NOT come to our aid.

A Socialist world, as I see it, is one in which

everybody has enough of everything necessary to life - & in addition, some comfort, leisure, holidays & weekends & free days. The question of unemployment does not arise. In the world today, there is a superabundance of all the materials which go to make the necessaries. And each country must be so organised, that they exchange these things with each other. In my opinion, the main problem should be one of finding enough work, but enough leisure for everyone. And this can be done in many ways - the school leaving age can be raised from 14 to 17 or 18 - all sorts of agents & middlemen & unnecessary people can be cut out - stock exchanges & all their ramifications done away with - there will be far less litigation - quack medicines & worthless patent foods & all their advertising should be stopped, & all medicines & foot pastes & special foods controlled by the State Medical Dept - all rubbishy books & magazines ended. This again would help to educate the people, & would save labour in manufacturing paper required for it. The publication of a book should not depend on whether the author can afford to publish it, or whether the publisher can see a profit in it.

In other words, all unnecessary production must be eliminated - & every increase in the efficiency of machines & methods of production must be with the idea of improving working conditions, providing more leisure & time for family life & the home & travelling about, & reading & music & art.

Is this Utopia? I do not think so. I think it is quite capable of achievement in a country which is run entirely solely for the benefit of its people.

But it will be a hard fight. The first necessity is to get a good strong Socialist government into power – & that should be the easiest part of it: if they will fit themselves out with a strong sensible policy & go hard for it. Once in power, they must go ahead with carrying out their policy, & be well disciplined among themselves. And about the first thing to do will be to do away with that ridiculous house of Lords.

But I think this is about enough of politics for one letter – if I go on like this very much longer you will have to stop & pinch yourself & ask yourself whether you are reading a letter from your adoring admiring husband or it is Keir Hardie's New Leader.

But it all began by me talking about our house, in answer to your letter.

And darling one – the letter came again today – the letter inviting applications for posting home on compassionate grounds. And so I am off again – I shall send the previous correspondence, & Hughes' certificate again, & just a new short letter to tell about the first day, & my worries about your worries, & my longing to see Max. And then I shall send another letter asking for an interview with the Area Commander & see if I can possibly get his support. And the answer should be back by about the middle of June, when I will cable

you at once, which will probably arrive before this. Having been optimistic before, I am afraid I have very little hope this time - unless I can persuade the A.C. to suppress my claim. And so now the suspense begins once more.

What joy to be home, darling, oh God how I want to come. It will be the most thrilling moment in all my life - I often wonder where, exactly, we will meet - I suppose it is almost bound to be on a station somewhere. I remember how I have always felt at home, when you have been away for only a few days - on Sept 21st on Schouen station, when your train was four hours late. What a moment it will be, my sweetheart - & what a nuisance the luggage will be.

We shall have so much to talk about we'll each other discuss, there will be plans to make, all the time, I shall not be able to leave go of you, & I shall want to kiss you again - again. It will be so wonderful - heavenly, it will be unreal.

When I am writing & writing to you, I long so much to be able to talk to you. And when I look at your photographs, which I do so much, I long to kiss you & hold you - love you. I imagine talking to you - sitting in our two chairs, in front of a fire, so much to talk of & to discuss each other. And I think of sitting on your chair, on the left arm, with my right arm round you - coming across your chest with my hand on your left shoulder - then becoming

a little excited & my right hand moved down your left shoulder & go down inside your dress & hold & stroke your left breast instead. And your breasts are so smooth & lovely & dear to me, & I moved feel more excited (as I do now) - & come round & sit in your chair, & kiss you very passionately & my hand moved hold your legs & their silkiness & their bareness, & go down inside your stocking & rest your knee. And then, oh my darling sweetest Barbara, the fire moved be warming both our bodies & we moved hold each other very tight, so that we could feel each other all the length of our bodies. What glorious happiness we have had, darling - & how even more glorious our future happiness will be.

I want you so much, my own beloved darling, to talk to you & you to talk to me & to love you & kiss you & hold you & look at you & be with you & help you & do things for you & make you happy & make you laugh, & make you love me & be sure that you are happy & content & looking forward. And to be with you & Marie too. How much we have to gain - I moved give & do anything to come home to you.

I love you with all my heart & soul, you are perfect, my darling own Barbara.

XX Marie. Always your Mary —— XXXXXX

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Mrs Barbara Mason.
c/o Mrs Paul
c/o Mrs Jenkins
Lynwood
6 Bulstrode Gardens
Caudhams Lane
Maddingley Road
Beaconsfield
Bucks
Cambridge

B. Mason.